

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 70

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6230

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 11 DAILY SITREP, APRIL 12, 1973

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG APR 12

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE NHA TRANG 389

1. SUMMARY: ENEMY ACTION CONCENTRATED IN BINH DINH AND PHU YEN. AREA WSW OF KONTUM CITY HAS QUIETED DOWN, APPARENTLY AS RESULT OF RADIO EXCHANGES BETWEEN OPPOSING SIDES. NHA TRANG ICCS DELEGATES PESSIMISTIC AFTER QUANG TRI HELICOPTER DOWNING. DEMOCRACY PARTY SAID TO BE ORGANIZED THROUGHOUT KHANH HOA PROVINCE.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTION THIS PERIOD WAS HIGHLY CONCENTRATED: 12 ENEMY- INITIATED INCIDENTS IN NORTHERN BINH DINH AND FOUR IN PHU YEN. REMAINING TWO INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN BINH THUAN AND PLEIKU. CUMULATIVE CASUALTY FIGURES (RVNAF, NINE KIA AND 15 WIA; VC, FOUR KIA) REFLECTED ENEMY REVERSION TO TACTIC OF STANDING OFF AND HITTING RVNAF OUTPOSTS AND PATROLS WITH INDIRECT FIRE ATTACKS AND COMMAND- DETONATED MINES, RESPECTIVELY. COMMENT: RESULTANT FRIENDLY ATTRITION, OFTEN WITH NO VISIBLE COMPENSATING LOSSES TO ENEMY, CONTINUES TO BE SOURCE OF COMMAND FRUSTRATION AND CAUSE OF WANING TROOP MORALE IN SOME RVNAF UNITS.

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3. SITUATION IN KONTUM: AFTER- ACTION REPORT ON DAYLIGHT ENEMY ATTACK BY FIRE AND GROUND ASSAULT ON RF COMPANY APRIL 10 IN AREA

APPROX 15 KMS WEST- SOUTHWEST OF KONTUM CITY (SAIGON 614 0, APRIL 11 SIT REP), WHICH RESULTED IN RF HIGH- TAILING IT, NOW LISTS FRIENDLY CASUALTIES AS ONE KIA, 45 WIA, AND 60 MIA; ENEMY LOSSES UNKNOWN.

4. HEAVY FIGHTING IN THIS AREA OF KONTUM OVER PAST TWO AND A HALF WEEKS, IN WHICH NVA/ VC HAVE ROUTED FOUR RF COMPANIES, HAS BEEN FOR CONTROL OF HIGH GROUND IN VICINITY ZA108813. HIGH GROUND DOMINATES AREAS TO EAST AND WEST. ENEMY APPARENTLY FEARS THUD RVNAF OCCUPATION OF IT COULD RESULT IN INTERDICTION OF AN INFILTRATION ROUTE TO WEST OF HIGH GROUND. (WE HAVE NOT YET ESTABLISHED WHO, IS ANYONE, WAS IN THE AREA ON JANUARY 28.)

5. HOWEVER, COMMANDERS OF OPPOSING FORCES IN AREA (280 TH AND 250 TH RF BATTALIONS; VC 304 TH LOCAL FORCE BATTALION, REINFORCED BY TWO COMPANIES OF NVA 95 B REGIMENT) HAVE ENTERED INTO FREQUENT RADIO CONTACT IN LAST SEVERAL DAYS. ACCORDING TO LATEST REPORT FROM KONTUM POLOFF, THE TWO SIDES HAVE NOW AGREED THAT NEITHER WILL ATTEMPT TO DEPLOY UNITS ON CONTESTED HILLTOP, AT PEAST FOR TIME BEING. EVIDENTLY AS RESULT OF THIS AGREEMENT, AREA HAS BEEN QUIET SINCE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 10.

6. AMENDED REPORT ON MINING OF PHU YEN SECTOR CONVOY ATTEMPTING TO

TRAVEL ROUTE 7- B TO SON HOA DISTRICT HQ APRIL 10 (SAIGON 6140, APRIL 11 SIT REP) LISTS NINE WOUNDED RATHER THAN 18. SECTOR ALSO REPORTS THAT VC FIRED 57- MM RECOILESS RIFLE AT THREE CIVILIAN VEHICLES ON SAME ROAD APRIL 10, KILLING ONE CIVILIAN AND WOUNDING THREE OTHERS.

7. THESE INCIDENTS DEMONSTRATE THAT VC STILL HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH GROUND ALONG ROUTE 7- B AND INTEND TO OPPOSE GVN ATTEMPT TO

OPEN ROAD TO REGULAR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN TRAFFIC. DISMISSED PHU YEN PROVINCE CHIEF LT. COL. NGUYEN VAN TO SHARES THIS VIEW. HE TOLD LARGE GROUP OF WELL- WISHERS SEEING HIM OFF AT TUY HOA AIRFIELD APRIL 11 THAT TASK OF MAINTAINING SECURITY ON ROUTE 7- B IS GOING TO BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED.

8. ICCS: DOWNING OF ICCS CHOPPER IN QUANG TRI APRIL 7 HAS DRAWN PESSIMISTIC REACTION FROM NHA TRANG
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ICCS DELEGATES WHOSE FLAG IS AT HALF- STAFF. RANKING CANDEL SAYS IT WAS JUST THE KIND OF INCIDENT THAT OTTAWA OPPONENTS OF CANADIAN ICCS PARTICIPATION HAD BEEN WAITING FOR AND COULD SPELL END OF THAT PARTICIPATION. " IF OUR SECURITY CANNOT BE ASSURED, IT IS OBVIOUS WE WON' T STAY," HE SAID. CANDEL BELIEVES SHOOT- DOWN WAS INTENTIONAL OR PRG' S PART AND SPECULATES THAT PRG MAY WANT ICCS OUT OF THE PICTURE IF A NEW OFFENSIVE IS BEING PLANNED. (CONTRARY CANADIAN REACTION HEARD IN PHAN THIET, WHERE REGION IV CHIEF, COL. CAMPBELL, TOLD POLOFF HE THINKS CHOPPER MIGHT HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN BY

ENEMY TROOPS WHO HAD KNOWN ONLY HOSTILE HELICOPTERS IN PAST AND WERE READY TO FIRE AT VERY SOUND.)

9. NHA TRANG POLDEL INTERPRETER TOLD POLOFF THAT LOCAL EAST EUROPEANS

ARE "DISTURBED, ANGRY AND UPSET" OVER THE INCIDENT. HE NOTED THAT HIS DELEGATION AND HUNGARIANS WERE ALREADY UNCOMFORTABLE IN STRANGE VC ENVIRONMENT AND UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM HIGHER HQ TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS PROPERLY OR FACE DEMOTION. QUANG TRI INCIDENT HARDLY ADDS TO THEIR SENSE OF WELL-BEING. INTERPRETER CLAIMS POLDEL/HUNGDEL FEELINGS IN NHA TRANG ARE SO STRONG THAT IF HIS TEAM WERE INVESTIGATING SHOOT-DOWN IT MIGHT ISSUE UNANIMOUS REPORT CONDEMNING PRG.

10. INDODEL REGIONAL CHIEF IN PHAN THIET, COL. DIHARDJO, TOLD POLOFF HE BELIEVES GVN CAN NEVER ACHIEVE TOTAL MILITARY VICTORY AGAINST DEDICATED VC ORGANIZATION. DIHARDJO BELIEVES A POLITICAL SOLUTION MUST BE WORKED OUT, THOUGH HE QUESTIONS GVN'S CAPACITY FOR WORKING OUT A SETTLEMENT AND DOUBTS PARTICULARLY THAT GVN WOULD EVER TOLERATE ITS FORMER ENEMIES OR REFRAIN FROM TAKING VENGEANCE ON THE M. A FORMER GUERRILLA HIMSELF, DIHARDJO COMPARED SITUATION IN VIET-NAM WITH INDONESIA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AGAINST THE DUTCH: "THE DUTCH HAD ALL THE POPULATED AREAS AND THE ROADS; WE HAD ALL THE REST." DIHARDJO NOTED THAT GVN IS RESPECTING THE CEASE-FIRE WHILE VC ARE NOT, JUST AS INDONESIANS REFUSED TO RESPECT TWO CEASE-FIRE WITH DUTCH UNTIL POLITICAL VICTORY ACHIEVED. COMMENT: DIHARDJO WAS EVIDENTLY LESS IMPRESSED THAN WE HAD THOUGHT WITH DEGREE OF GVN CONTROL HE HAD SEEN IN HIS EXTENSIVE TRAVELS, WHICH INCLUDE CIRCULAR TRIP FROM PHAN THIET BY ROAD WHICH TOOK HIM THROUGH PHAN RANG, DALAT AND XUAN LOC.

11. GVN POLITICAL ORGANIZING: KHANH HOA DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF CLAIMS DEMOCRACY PARTY NOW HAS CHAPTERS IN EVERY VILLAGE AND HAMLET
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IN PROVINCE WITH TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF 10,700; THERE ARE 7,500 MORE MEMBERS IN NHA TRANG. KHANH HOA DP LEADERS HAVE DIVIDED INTO TWO TEAMS AND ARE PLANNING VISITS TO EACH DISTRICT TO INDOCTRINATE LOWER-ECHOLON LEADERS, WHO IN TURN WILL THEN CONVENE PUBLIC MEETINGS. IN DPC'S OPINION, OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES IN KHANH HOA, ALONE OR IN VARIOUS MERGERS, ARE TOO WEAK TO POSE ANY THREAT TO THE DEMOCRACY PARTY. SIGNED ENGLE UNQUOTE
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